

Message Text

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45

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INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BC, RH

SUBJECT: MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ON RHODESIA

1. JUNE 24 EDITION OF BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS CARRIED FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ON LAST WEEK'S BBCN INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS A. M. MOGWE ON THE RHODESIAN QUESTION. IN THE INTERVIEW, MOGWE STATED THAT BOTSWANA UNDERSTANDS THE MOTIVES OF "FREEDOM FIGHTS" BUT ABHORS VIOLENCE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT RUMORS OF GUERRILLA BASES IN BOTSWANA, MOGWE RESPONDED THAT BOTSWANA HAS QUOTE PLACES WHERE REFUGEES CAN COME AND GET HELP IN SAFETY UNQUOTE AND THAT BOTSWANA ASSISTS PEOPLE WANTING TO STUDY OVERSEAS.

2. MOGWE CONFIRMED THAT THE QUESTION OF CUTTING THE BOTSWANA-RHODESIA RAIL LINK HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN KINGSTON AND INDICATED THAT BOTSWANA WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT CUT THE LINK. HE STATED THAT QUOTE THE SACRIFICE TO BOTSWANA MIGHT BE TOO GREAT UNQUOTE BECAUSE THE LINE IS BOTSWAN'S SOLE RAILWAY AND ITS CLOSING WOULD PARTICULARLY AFFECT THE MINING INDUSTRY.

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3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUNDAY TIMES OF JUNE 22 FEATURED AN ARTICLE ON MOGWE INTERVIEW. ARTICLE, ENTITLED "BOTSWANA TO HDLP TERRORISTS," INACCURATELY QUOTED MOGWE AS SAYING THAT GUERRILA BASES ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN BOTSWANA. REMAINDER OF ARTICLE ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE AND CARRIED SAME QUOTES AS BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS STORY.

4. CHARGE' DISCUSSED ARTICLE WITH SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TIBONE, WHO POINTED OUT THE TENDENTIOUS AND INACCURATE CHARACTER OF THE ARTICLE AND PARTICULARLY OF THE HEADLINE. TIBONE REITERATED BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT TERRORISITS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO USE BOTSWANA TERRITORY. REGARDING MOGWE'S STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF THE RAILROAD, TIBONE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CAREFULLY CONSIDERING ALL RAMIFICATIONS OF CLOSURE.
THOMSEN

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